

V

THE FIRST "ROUGON-MACQJTJARTS"

1868-1872

The GoncourtSj Zola, and his proposed "family history" —
 Origin of this
 idea — Degeneration and heredity — Zola's agreement
 with M. Lacroix—
 He begins "La Fortune des Eongon" — His intercourse
 with Meurice,
 Coppee, etc.— His work on " Le Kappel," "La Tribune,"
 "Le Gaulois"
 — Sincerity of his democratic views — Goncourt's allegation
 that he would
 have sold his pen to the Empire — Some venal French
 journalists — Zola's
 marriage and opinion of the married state — His home
 in the Eue de
 La Oondamine — "Le Siecle" and "La Fortune des
 Rougon".— "La
 Curee" begun — Zola takes his ailing wife to Provence —
 Outbreak of
 war with Germany — Zola and military service — He
 conducts a news-
 paper at Marseilles, becomes Secretary to Glais-Bizoin at
 Bordeaux, and
 is offered a Sub-Prefecture'—His chances as a state
 functionary — He
 reverts to journalism and literature — His work on "La
 Cloche" and
 "Le Oorsaire" —Publication of "La Fortune des Eougon" —
 The public
 prosecutor and "La Curee" — Its issue in book form —
 Failure of Zola's
 publisher, Lacroix — The novelist's dire distress — The
 wool of Ms mat-
 tresses sold to bxiy bread—He is recommended by
 Theophile Gautier to
 M. Charpentier — His "slop" clothes and his new
 publishing contract —
 M. Charpentier's generous honesty — How Zola passed
 from penury to
 affluence,

IT has been mentioned already that when the
 Goncourts'
 novel, " Germinie Lacerteux," was published in
 1865, some
 little correspondence took place between
 Zola and the
 authors, they being really grateful to him for
 the favour-
 able review of their work which he had
 contributed to " Le
 Salut Public/' of Lyons. They told him that he
 alone had
 understood the book, that his frankness
 consoled them for
 much of the literary hypocrisy of the times,
 and that they

admired his courage in daring to confess his likings.¹ Subsequently, wishing to become personally acquainted with

¹ "Lettres de Jules de Goncourt," etc., Paris, 1885, p. 219.
(Letter dated
February 27, 1865.)